

CONFIGURABLE TOY AND ITEM OF WEARING APPAREL

Inventor: Megan Tobin

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel, comprising any number removably attachable segments.

Background of the Invention

Today, it is common to see wearing apparel and plush toy animals. Articles which are both toys and wearing apparel are known in the art, particularly for children. By way of example, reference is made to U.S. Patent Nos. 4,448,315, and 4,543,669, 5,791,963, and 6,126,507.

However, the art does not disclose any such item that can be variably configured by virtue of having any number of segments that can be interchangeably attached and detached so as to change the appearance of the item.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention, an animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and an item of wearing apparel, comprises a combined toy/wearing apparel having a plurality of removably attachable segments. These segments are removably attachable by at least one attachment means. The article is dimensioned such that it is worn by a wearer. The removably attachable segments are adapted to variably configure the article.

In one embodiment the removably attachable segments of the article are comprised of a head segment; and a plurality of body segments. The embodiment can also comprise at least one cover segment and a base segment. It may even further include at least one appendage

segment. The invention may also be designed such that the removably attachable segments are also comprised of different colors; and these segments may be configured to alter at least one color of the article.

The animal shaped toy and item of wearing apparel is capable of multiple configurations. It can take any animal form imaginable, including that of a reptile, a bird, an amphibian, a fish, a mammal, or even protozoa. In one embodiment the invention is designed such that removably attachable segments are used to configure the article into any number of animal shapes. In yet another embodiment of the article the removably attachable segments may be configured in various ways so as to alter the size of the article.

As the article is an item of wearing apparel, it can be worn anywhere on a wearer, for example on the neck portion of the wearer, the waist portion of the wearer, or the shoulder portions of the wearer. The article can be made of a soft material, for example, fleece, velvet, plush, silk or faux fur. The article may also include a catch which would allow the article to be positioned on the body as desired.

Other optional embodiments of the invention include those where the combination toy and item of wearing apparel is stuffed or where it further comprises an external opening leading to an internal cavity which can contain at least one good or belonging of the wearer. Another optional embodiment is where the article also includes a sound generating device.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIGS. 1A to 1D represent a configurable animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel as worn on the neck of a wearer.

FIGS. 2A to 2C represent a configurable animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel with removably attachable segments.

FIG. D represents a configurable animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel as worn on the neck of a wearer where the article's segments have been configured to make it shorter.

FIGS. 2E to 2I represent a configurable animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel with removably attachable segments, including removably attachable cover segments.

FIGS. 3A and 3B represent a configurable animal shaped article which is both a stand alone toy and item of wearing apparel which included a cavity which can hold a good or belonging.

Detailed Description of the Invention

In **FIGS. 1-2** are shown the preferred embodiments of the present invention. As shown in **FIGS. 1B-D** the article **10** is shown as a snake shaped scarf worn around the neck of the wearer **12**. The article **10** could also be worn as a wrap which is worn around the waist or a shawl which is worn around the shoulders (not shown). Optionally the article **10** can include a catch (not shown) which allows it to be worn as desired, for example, around the waist as a

wrap. Herein a catch means any device which can be used to aid in positioning the article on a wearer.

The article **10** is in the shape of an animal. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines an animal as "any of a kingdom (Animalia) of living things including many-celled organisms and often many of the single-celled ones (as protozoans) that typically differ from plants in having cells without cellulose walls, in lacking chlorophyll and the capacity for photosynthesis, in requiring more complex food materials (as proteins), in being organized to a greater degree of complexity, and in having the capacity for spontaneous movement and rapid motor responses to stimulation." Animals within the scope of this invention include, for example, mammals such as dogs and cats, insects, arachnids, turtles, reptiles such as snakes and lizards, frogs, sharks, dolphins, and fish. This broad definition of animal can even encompass human beings. **FIG. 1A** shows an embodiment where the article **10** is in the form of a mammal, specifically a dog. In **FIG. 1B-D** the article's **10** animal form is that of a snake, which is a reptile.

The article **10** is both a toy and item of wearing apparel and is designed to be configured in any number of ways, as shown in **FIG. 2**. The embodiment at **FIG. 2A** takes the reptilian form of a snake, and is composed of a head segment **2** and two body segments **4**. The segments **2,4**, when attached, form the item which is both wearing apparel and toy. The segments **2,4** are detachable so as to allow a user to reconfigure the article **10**. The article **10**,

while wearable as a scarf, is shown as a stand alone toy. As such, although functional as an item of wearing apparel, it is independently functional as a toy.

At **FIG. 2B** the article **10** is shown with one of the body segments **4** detached. The body segment **4** is tubular and preferably consists primarily of a soft material such as silk, faux fur, velvet, fleece or plush. The detachable segments **4** have at their distal end **10** and proximal end **8** attachment means **9** so as to allow the segment **4** to be removably attachable. The head segment **2** also is removably attachable, but only at the base of the head. Herein an attachment means is any mechanism that renders the segments **4** attachable and detachable for example, attachment means **9** could be either Velcro™, buttons, clips, snaps, hooks, adhesive or adhesive strips, elastic or non-elastic bands, magnets, buckles, or zippers, tab and slot configurations, materials that can be tied such as laces or twist-ties, or a flexible material that has sufficient tensile strength such that it can be bent to secure the connection between segments. An attachment means can even comprise designing the cover segment such that it can be positioned on the article **10** such that it is fixed to the article until removed, such as in the case where the cover segment is designed to be a shirt which slips over a base segment which has arms and a torso.

The article **10** is capable of many different appearances. The segments **4** can be any number of colors or patterns, and are interchangeable so as to alter the appearance of the article **10**. The article **10** could also have its size changed. For example, the article could be shortened. One manner of doing so would be by removing a body segment **4** and joining the remaining

body segments 4 of the article 10 together. **FIG. 2D** shows a shortened article 10, as draped around the neck 12.

At **FIG. 2B** an embodiment is shown with cover segments 6. The cover segments 6 can be attached and detached from a base segment of the article 10 and can be used to alter its appearance. Cover segments 6 can have any type of patterns or colors. A base segment is any segment of the article upon which the cover segments are removably attachable to. For example, any number of the cover segments 6 could be attached along the head segment 2 and body segments 4 of the snake shaped article 10 and, by attaching the cover segments 6 side by side or at intervals along the snake shaped article 10, create the appearance of stripes. In this embodiment the head segment 2 and body segments 4 serve as a base segment.

Cover segments, used in the above described manner, can also be used to variably configure an animal shaped toy and item of wearing apparel where, for example, the head and body are one piece. Such an embodiment is shown at **FIGS. 2E, 2F and 2G**, wherein the head 2 and body 4 act as one base segment 4 and the cover segments 6 are attached thereto.

An further embodiment for changing the appearance may be by making the cover segments 6 reversible. In **FIGS. 2E, 2F and 2G** reversible cover segments 6 allow the wearable animal toy to be reconfigured. The reversible cover segments 6 can include different colors, patterns, or textures. Each reversible cover segment is designed such that it has at least two sides 6a,6b such as shown at 2E. In **FIG 2E** one side 6a of the removably attachable reversible cover segment 6, when attached, is exposed such that it gives the article 10 one

appearance, while another side **6b** is concealed. The reversible cover segment **6** can then be removed and reattached, for example by reattaching the cover segment such that another side **6b** is exposed and the first side **6a** is concealed, as shown in **FIG. 2G**, resulting in another appearance. Thus depending on how the reversible cover segments **6** are connected, the article can be variably configured with alternate patterns, colors, materials, and textures, thus altering the appearance of the article **10**.

At **FIG. 2C**, is an embodiment showing segments shaped as appendages **16** which can be attached and detached to form different animal shapes. The animal shape is shown as a lizard. The detachable appendages **16** are in the form of four legs and a tail. In this embodiment the appendages **16** can be detached such that the animal shape can be configured to appear as a snake, but when attached the article **10** takes the animal shape of a lizard. The appendages **16** could also be designed to look like the legs and tail of a dog, and the head segment **2** be detached and replaced with a head segment **2** shaped like a dog's head so as to form the article which is both a dog shaped scarf and toy as shown in **FIG 1A**.

As an alternate means of configuring the article, the appendage segments **16** can be attached to a cover segment, as shown in **FIGS. 2H and 2I**. In **FIG. 2H**, a head segment **2** and a body segment **4** are attached to form a base segment. A cover segment **6** for the body segment **4** includes a cross pattern down the middle **26**. This can be placed over the body segment **4** and secured at the base of the head segment **2** by an attachment means **9** as shown at **FIG 2I**. The attachment means **9** can be an elastic, Velcro, or other securing band or

mechanism. Optional attachable appendage segments **16**, here shown as legs, form a lizard shape may be connected by attachment means **9** to the cover segment **6** or the body segment **4**. **FIG. 2I** shows the cross patterned cover segment **6**, fastened to the body segment **4**, by attachment means **9** at the base of the head **2**. In this case, the appendage segments **16** are attached to the cover segment **6**, transforming the snake shape into a lizard shape.

An embodiment is shown at **FIG. 3** where the article **10** is configured to hold a belonging or good **18**, for example, a towel. In this embodiment the head segment **2** and appendage segments **16** are used to create a dolphin shape. The body segment **4** is designed to have an external opening **20** which allows access to a internal cavity **22** inside the article **10**. The cavity can then be used to contain a good or belonging **18** such as a towel. The opening **20** can then be closed by using a zipper, buttons, snaps, or any other closing mechanism **24** attached to the opening **20**. At **FIG. 3B** is the article **10** as draped about the neck as a scarf.

In each of the embodiments it is possible for some or all of the segments to be stuffed. For example, in **FIG. 2A** it is possible for each of the segments **4** of the article **10** to be stuffed or hollow. In the case of **FIG. 3**, while the body segment **4** is preferably designed to be completely hollow so as to allow an internal cavity **20** to be formed, the appendages **16** and the head **2** could nonetheless be stuffed or hollow.

The embodiments may also optionally include components that enhance the article **10** by accomplishing a specific function or purpose such as for entertainment, for therapy, or for

animating the article **10**. These components are joined to the article **10** in any number of ways, for example they may be enclosed, attached, inserted, or removably attached. Such devices include, but are not limited to, safety devices such as reflective or light emitting devices or materials (e.g., small light or a glow in the dark device or material); sound generating devices; cold, heat, or scent packs or similar therapeutic items; tracking, signaling, or communication devices; or a motion generating device such as a vibrating device; or even personal computers.

For example, an embodiment may also optionally include a sound generator so as to animate the article **10**. For example, in the snake shaped article **10** of **FIG. 1** and **FIG. 2**, the sound generator could be a rattle shaped device filled with beads (not shown) that simulated the sound of a rattlesnake and which could be attached to the tail end of the device. In the case of the dog shaped article **10**, a mechanism (not shown) containing a recording of a dog's bark or a funny voice could be placed inside the article **10** and designed to make a sound when the article **10** is squeezed. The sound generator could also be adapted to sound an alarm as a safety measure. The sound generator such as a radio or other media player could also be adapted to play music for entertainment or therapeutic purposes. A motion generator could be placed inside the article **10** such that it imparts motion to the article **10**, such as by animating the article's **10** limbs or by causing it to vibrate.